

CITY OF HAYWARD
AGENDA REPORT

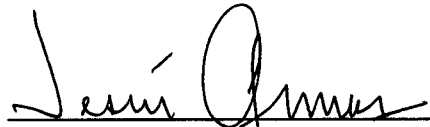
AGENDA DATE 03/20/01

AGENDA ITEM _____

WORK SESSION ITEM WS#2

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: Informational Report on Gang Activity

The attached report contains sobering news about a critical issue facing this community, and merits careful consideration and thoughtful deliberation. Given the information contained therein, a measured response is in order----sooner rather than later. Accordingly, I have instructed the Chief to develop a proposal that would focus on the allocation of additional funding resources to enable the City to respond to this issue, both from the standpoint of prevention as well as enforcement. Moreover, it seems appropriate to consider such an allocation during this budget year, and not wait for the start of the next fiscal year. Hence, I anticipate presenting a suitable proposal to you for your consideration within thirty days.


Jesús Armas, City Manager

Attachment



CITY OF HAYWARD

AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE 03/20/01

AGENDA ITEM _____

WORK SESSION ITEM _____

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Gangs and Youth Violence

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council review and comment on this report.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

Gang activity and youth violence experienced in the last months of 2000 and into the early months of this year has been unique. Confrontations between youth from north Hayward and south Hayward escalated and a volley of retaliations fueled this very serious situation, resulting in unprecedented levels of youth violence. The circumstances sparked numerous acts of violence including homicides, drive-by shootings, assaults and stabbings. Additionally, gang related graffiti increased sharply and became visible across the entire City.

There were a number of incidents and circumstances that contributed to this phenomenon. In July of 1999 a fight between opposing gangs served as a starting point for the violence that would follow. As a result of this altercation a gang from north Hayward set out to retaliate against a gang from south Hayward. This senseless act of retaliation resulted in the death of a young athlete living in south Hayward, who was mistaken for a rival gang member.

Unfortunately, the young man who was walking home late in the evening after visiting his girlfriend was wearing a red baseball hat and was carrying a red shirt. The hat and shirt were the colors of a baseball team he had played on during the summer. Since the young man was wearing red, the colors of the gang who was targeted for retaliation, he was confronted and savagely shot to death. Even though the victim in this situation was not a gang member, the intended victims from the south found it necessary to retaliate against their northern rivals. This laid the groundwork for a number of serious acts of violence that would follow.

Gang related homicides, which followed in January 2001 and March 2001, served as catalysts for ongoing violent gang retaliations and sharp increases in gang related crimes. The January homicide involved a new gang from the southwest area of Hayward. Police had been aware of this group; however, to that point the group had been inert. This group was heavily

influenced by a hardcore San Jose gang member, who quickly involved these youth in guns and violence. The San Jose gang member, who had been involved in a shooting in south Hayward and was also wanted for attempted homicide on a San Jose Police Sergeant, was eventually arrested by Hayward Officers. Unfortunately, the group from southwest Hayward continues to be heavily involved in the ongoing violence and acts of retaliation.

The most recent homicide, which occurred this month, is another example of a senseless death. As a group of youth in north Hayward were preparing to leave their neighborhood to attend a birthday party, they were approached by a suspected rival gang member. The suspect then pulled a gun and shot one of the young men to death. This most recent homicide will surely perpetuate the ongoing acts of violence and retaliation. The attached graph (Attachment #1) clearly depicts the ongoing acts of violence and retaliation that has been unending since July of last year.

Surrounding these events, between July 2000 and February 2001, more than 70 serious gang related crimes were reported to the police. These serious crimes included four homicides, 30 felony assaults and 12 incidents of shots being fired at residences or vehicles. Additionally, there was a firebombing and numerous reports of shots fired throughout gang plagued neighborhoods (Attachment #2). During this period over 80% of the gang related crimes reported to police involved the use of a firearm. Gang activity that was once concentrated in just several areas of our city has virtually expanded citywide.

POLICE RESPONSE:

The Police Department recognizes that gangs and youth violence are serious problems that require the implementation of both short and long term strategies. Using strict guidelines set by the Department of Justice, more than 1,000 active gang members have been identified in the City of Hayward. Conservative estimates indicate that there are more than 300 gang-affiliated students on Hayward Unified School District campuses.

While there are a number of youth programs and strategies already in place, it has become necessary to take extraordinary action immediately. The short-term police response to this problem has involved the utilization of personnel from all divisions of the Police Department. Additional officers have been assigned to the Special Duty Unit, the Narcotics Bureau has been reassigned, and a number of Patrol Officers have been redirected to address this issue. Additionally, it has been necessary to utilize a significant amount of overtime to suppress this cycle of violence.

Those assigned to this situation have been directed to focus solely on gangs and youth violence. An analysis of this situation reveals that when police resources are increased and dedicated solely to this problem, incidents of violence decrease quite rapidly (Attachment #3). There is a direct correlation between the number of officers assigned to gang problems and the number of gang related incidents; however, fiscally this strategy is very expensive, and it creates a

detrimental effect on the overall operations of the Police Department. At best, this type of response can be viewed as a non-sustainable short-term solution.

The Police Department recently initiated efforts to mobilize community leaders and to facilitate the development of a community wide strategic plan to address the gang situation. A series of meetings were conducted, which were intended to make community leaders aware of the current situation and to develop long-term strategies and solutions. These meetings included leaders of the faith community, non-profit organizations, youth organizations and school district officials. Additional efforts will be made in the near future to involve the business community in this endeavor.

These meetings have been quite successful, and the belief that gangs and youth violence is a community wide concern, not just a police or city issue, has been well communicated and accepted by those involved. The group is quickly moving forward with a two-pronged approach to the situation. The initial approach consists of a parental component. A series of community meetings have been scheduled, which have been designed to make parents and adults aware of the existing gang situation in the community and to provide education regarding the warning signs when a child begins to get involved in gangs.

Concurrently, the second part of the plan, which consists of a series of workshops for at risk youth, have already been initiated. These workshops will provide an opportunity for youth to get to know the police as well as other adult leaders in the community. Time will be devoted to the hazards of gang involvement, how to avoid getting involved in gangs and how to leave a gang for those already involved. This workshop will also serve as an opportunity for our youth be involved in developing strategies to address this serious problem.

It is important to note resources and programs that are currently in place, which serve as integral parts of the Police Department's ongoing long-term strategy to address gangs and youth violence:

Gang Prevention Officer: One Police Officer, who is an expert in gangs, works closely with the Hayward Unified School District. This officer frequently provides gang presentations to teachers and administrators. He also works closely with families and parents in recognizing the early warning signs of gang involvement and what to do if a child has already become involved in a gang. Additionally, this officer educates, mentors and assists youth and other community members in the actual dangers of gang affiliation.

School Resource Officers: School Resource Officers work inside classrooms and on school campuses to educate students about the dangers of gang involvement. They conduct assemblies and frequently talk to youth, one-on-one, about prevention issues. These officers are keenly aware of any gang related situations that develop on school campuses.

MPACT: MPACT is a program recently developed by the Youth and Family Services Bureau. This program is designed to help youth at risk who have been unresponsive to initial intervention services. This program is designed to educate these high-risk individuals on the potential consequences of a life of crime and violence.

Professional Therapists: The counselors in the Youth and Family Services Bureau are very involved in prevention. One counselor is available daily for crisis intake, while others focus on assisting youth who have been arrested for minor violations. Counselors are also available for those having school or family problems.

Youth Collaborative: The Youth Collaborative is a four-week program modeled after the Community Collaborative. This program focuses on youth leadership, problem solving, city government, police procedures and laws that affect youth. This program has served as an excellent opportunity for the youth of our community to get to know police officers on a more personal level.

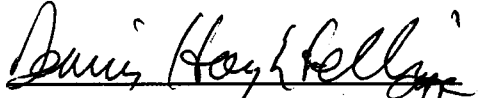
CONCLUSION:

Gangs and youth violence are serious societal problems that plague cities across our nation. Statistics support the fact that more police officers can be an effective tool in reducing or suppressing youth violence. While this strategy is effective, the constant shuffling of personnel within the department in order to bolster enough resources to accomplish this is disruptive and often quite costly to the organization.


While we believe that long-term strategies including intervention and prevention programs are beneficial, the actual results are very difficult to measure, at least in the short term. It is, however, obvious that the police alone cannot solve this problem. With the recent involvement of a number of community leaders, it appears the foundation has been laid for a community wide effort to take place. As this community wide effort proceeds, the Police Department will maintain a leadership role in assuring that everything possible is being done to address this very serious problem.

Additionally, the Police Department will explore the feasibility of expanding existing prevention programs. The work done by the Gang Prevention Officer has been very successful, however, because there is only one officer assigned to this task the overall effectiveness of the program has been somewhat limited. There may also be other options available such as the utilization of college interns or grant programs to provide counseling and outreach services.

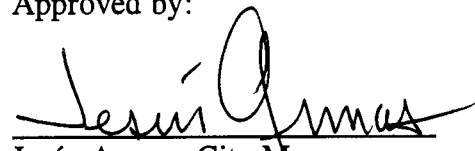
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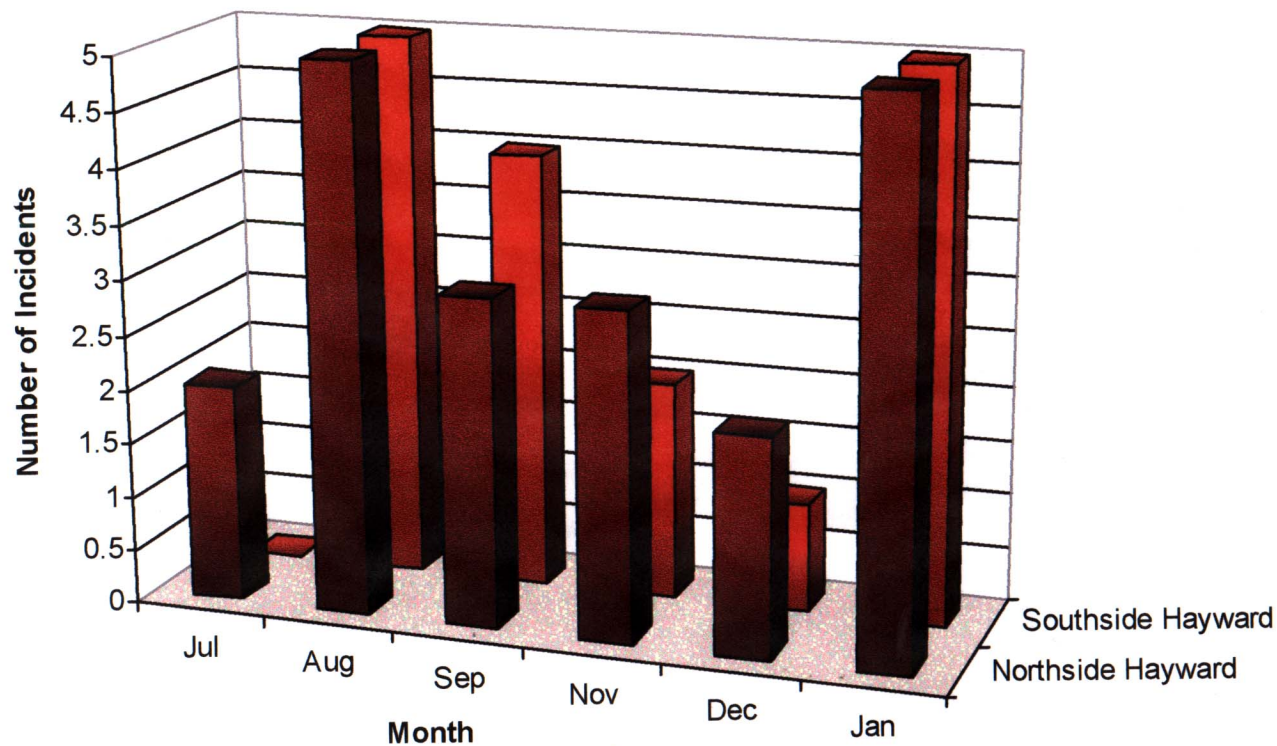
Approved by:


Jesús Armas, City Manager

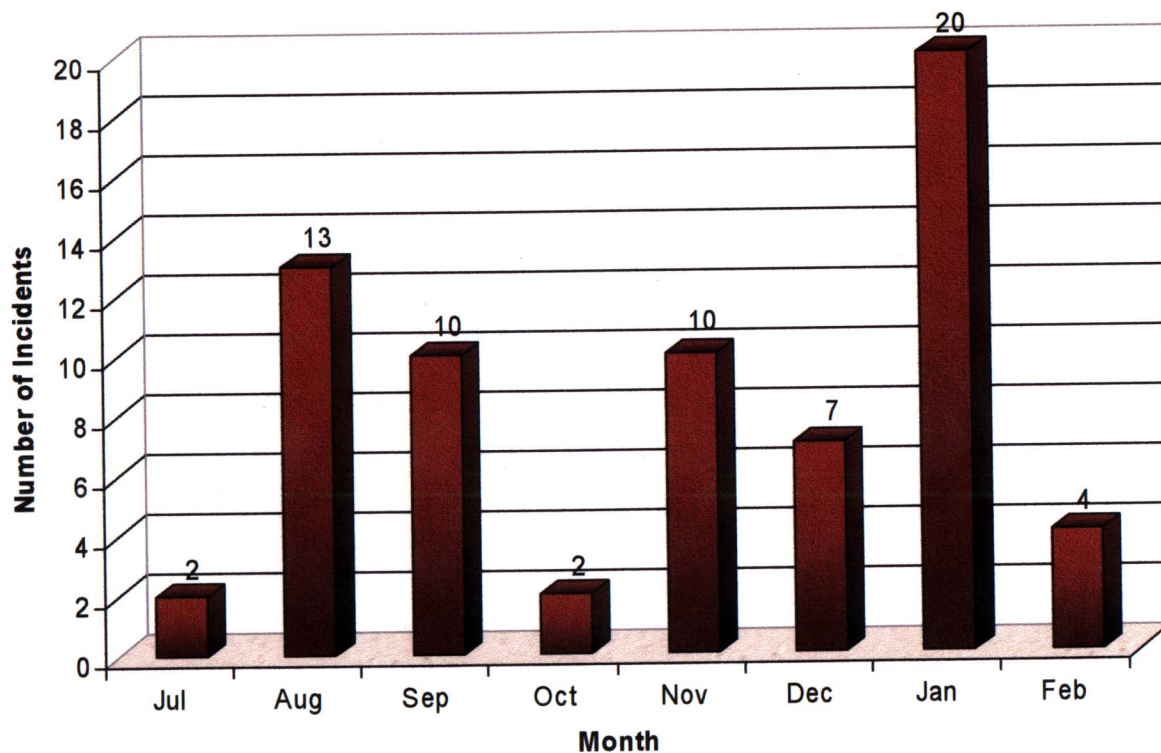
Attachments:

- #1 Gang Activity by Affiliation: July 2000 through January 2001
- #2 Gang Activity: August 2000 through February 2001
- #3 Staffing Levels and Gang Activity

Gang Activity by Affiliation: July 2000 through January 2001



Gang Activity: August 2000 through February 2001



Staffing Levels and Gang Activity

